

METHOD OF RECORDING AND PLAYING BASEBALL GAME SHOWING EACH BATTER'S LAST PITCH

Inventors: Greg M. Mockry and George Mockry

This invention relates to a method of condensing the action portions of a baseball game or other sporting event, by recording the game on film or video tape, and editing it to retain the action portions, i.e., the last pitch thrown to the batters for each turn at the plate.

There are nine players in the field, i.e., on defense, at positions of catcher, pitcher, first base, second base, shortstop, third base, left field, center field and right field. The batting, or offensive, team bats one player at a time, in turn. Each team's half-inning ends when the three outs have been recorded. An out can occur for a given batter only when the batter has struck out or batted the ball into play, although a batter can remain at the plate if a base runner is tagged out, i.e., in a pick-off or if caught stealing. The player can only advance legally to first and be a base runner as a result of the last pitch thrown to him in a given turn at the plate, i.e., he can hit safely, be awarded a base on balls, be struck by a pitch, or strike out and reach first safely after a dropped or passed third strike. Any runners on base advance under these circumstances or are tagged or forced out. There are other ways a base runner can advance before a batter's turn comes to an end, for example, by stealing base, or on account of a wild pitch or a balk.

During a baseball game, there is considerable time taken during each half-inning in which there is only limited action on the field. For example, for a given player's turn at bat, there can be six or more pitches thrown before the player hits the ball into play, strikes out, or walks. In addition, there is often a great deal of time used in pick off attempts and conferences in the infield, and in changing places between half-innings. A nine-inning game can typically last between two and three hours, and sometimes longer.

In accordance with an aspect of this invention, a film or video record is made of each player's turn at bat. The video record, which can be film, digital, or tape, is edited down to retain the last pitch thrown to each player, plus any resulting action for that pitch. This would record each safe base hit, each walk, strike out, sacrifice fly, ground out, etc. Of course, fielding would be recorded, i.e., each put-out, error, double-play, and throw-out. The resulting video record would be about 10 to 15 minutes, showing all the action of the game. Base running activity (i.e.,

activity that can also result in either an out or advancement of the runner) can also be retained, such as stolen bases and attempted steals, pickoffs, rundowns, balks, and wild pitches. Some additional material (e.g., narrative) can be included to explain pitching changes, pinch runners, and other substitutions that may affect play.

The completed (edited) version can be sold on a per-game basis, i.e., through a cable subscription arrangement, or delivered digitally over the Internet to subscribers, perhaps using a password and PIN assigned to the subscriber. The 10 to 15 minute video can also be used by professional scouts and others for purposes of player evaluation. The editing could take place immediately after each play, so that the recorded video could be released to its viewership immediately after the game. Each inning or half-inning can be packaged as a unit, if desired. This could increase interest in baseball, by making the game available, on a near-real-time basis, to fans some distance from the ball park, i.e., 75 miles or more. This could also permit satellite viewing of the game at remote locations, without requiring the full bandwidth that is needed for an unedited version or live telecast.

This procedure and the resulting action video can be used for other sports as well. In track and field, the last attempt or heat of each event could be recorded, e.g., the last pole-vault attempt for each athlete competing, and the last twenty meters of each race or heat. The invention would likewise apply in swimming and diving, or in figure skating. In horse racing, the final stretch and finish of each race would be recorded. This invention could also be adapted to baseball-related sports such as fast-pitch softball and cricket. The invention can be applied to net sports, e.g., capturing all game points in a tennis match, and capturing each score in volleyball. This system can also be adapted to show the important action in goal sports such as hockey, lacrosse, basketball, soccer, rugby, and football. The invention can also be used to feature target sports, i.e., to follow all the shots of a given player in golf or in billiards, or every roll in bowling.